

900 HIRING AND EVALUATING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

900 OVERVIEW

The hiring of a new Chief Executive officer (CEO) is the Fair Board (Board) responsibility that has the greatest impact on the fair's character, development, and effectiveness. From recruitment to selection and on through annual evaluation of the CEO's performance, the Board sets the standards for overall management of the fair through the care and attention it devotes to its selection of the top executive. Selection of the CEO is the Board's expression of values and goals through hiring decisions. CEOs have total and exclusive responsibility for selection and supervision of all other staff. The staff is responsible directly and only to the CEO, who is then responsible to the Board for all staff supervision and management. CEOs are under no obligation to hire employees recommended by Board directors.

901 RECRUITMENT

Before beginning an executive search process, the Board needs to integrate the working conditions and environment the members believe are necessary to enable effective executive performance. This requires the Board to (i) revisit the fair's vision for the future and ensure the mission statement is up-to-date; (ii) review and update the duties and responsibilities of the CEO (Duty Statement) (iii) analyze the fair's major strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities; and (iv) establish priorities and goals for at least the first year of the new CEO's tenure. With consensus achieved on these matters, the Board is empowered to recognize candidates who should be given serious consideration and, thus, is ready to begin recruiting.

901.1 Position Description

In general, the CEO is the agent of the Board, appointed to carry out its policies and decisions. Beyond this broad category, the Chief Executive Officer's duties, functions, and scope of authority, is defined by the Board in a written position description (Duty Statement). This document should describe the characteristics and skills the board desires in a new executive. The position description should state clearly the terms for employment and compensation and either specify information to be submitted in writing or include an application form as an attachment.

902 Search Process

Attracting qualified candidates requires that the Board advertise the Chief Executive Officer position through the State Personnel Board's internet web site, as well as in publications that reach not only outside the fair's geographic area but also outside state. A similar strategy should be employed to circulate the position description and application form to people and organizations through which suitable candidates may have an opportunity to learn of the CEO vacancy at the fair.

CEO Search Packages may be obtained from the Division of Fairs and Expositions. These packages contain:

- Current CEO salary ranges
- Career Opportunity Announcement
- Information sheet about the fair (sample)
- News release (sample)
- CEO Search Process Budget
- Cover letter to send out with the job applications (sample)
- Application for employment (sample)
- Release of Confidential Information (sample)
- Tips for a successful CEO search
- Questions you can and cannot ask a job applicant
- Statement of Economic Interest, Form 700

902.1 Vacancy Advertising

DAAs are required to advertise the vacancy/active recruitment through the State's internet vacancy web site. The CDFA Human Resources Branch (HRB) is the central point for submission of active recruitment to the State vacancy web site. HRB also provides assistance to DAAs in matters of salary, required duration of vacancy advertising, as well as numerous personnel issues. Refer to Chapter 1500 for a HRB contact list.

In addition to advertising the active recruitment at the State web site, fairs should also advertise in the local newspapers, and any other trade and related organization periodicals/newsletters. Fairs may also forward to F&E a copy of the Career Opportunity Announcement for broadcast faxing to the network of California fairs. Refer to Chapter 1500 for an F&E contact list.

903 SELECTION

The first screening of applications should be completed by a Selection Committee composed of two to four Board members appointed by the board chair (if more than two board members sit on the Selection Committee, this group's meetings will be subject to public meeting laws¹). The Selection Committee analyzes applicant qualifications as they pertain to the fair's strengths and weaknesses identified by the Board and strategic plan. It is not necessary to interview every candidate, only those candidates who pass the application screening process. After identifying candidates who meet the qualification criteria, an interview is scheduled with each. The Selection Committee's next task is to investigate the prior performance of the top two or three candidates. This can be accomplished through conversations with key sources, by phone or in person. Contacts need not be limited to persons offered as references but may include peers and former employees and/or, if applicable, Board members in the candidates' prior situations. The Selection Committee is responsible for knowing and abiding by relevant laws concerning privacy and discrimination. After completing these steps, the Selection Committee reports its findings back to the full Board, including a hiring recommendation.

903.1 Communication with Staff

The Board has a duty to keep the fair's staff informed of progress on selection of a new CEO. Even when the Board has no news, providing a status report demonstrates to the staff that the process is active and either on schedule or progressing according to a revised schedule. This communication is essential to maintaining staff morale and productivity.

904 BOARD-CEO INTERACTIONS

The Board has a responsibility to be supportive of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and to recognize that the CEO's effectiveness is at least partially dependent on Board action or inaction. While this responsibility will fall primarily on the Board chair (or president), every member of the Board is obligated to make sure that the Chief Executive Officer:

- Receives constructive feedback
- Is recognized for implementing initiatives that add value to the fair program
- Receives Board support when individual members overstep their prerogatives or misunderstand their roles
- Knows that the Board will not hold the CEO to a higher set of standards than it has set for itself

¹Fair Board Directors are responsible for knowing and obeying open meeting laws. If your fair is a DAA, the fair should have a copy of a report prepared by the Attorney General's Office: *Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Laws* (1989), with amendments; this report covers open meeting requirements applicable to state agencies. If your fair is not a DAA, the fair should have a copy of *The Brown Act* (1994), also prepared by the Attorney General's Office; this report covers open meeting requirements applicable to local agencies. Refer to the Appendix, Section 500 for a copy of these documents. Your CEO can obtain additional copies by calling the Publications Office in the Department of Justice in Sacramento at (916) 324-5765 or by Internet at www.caag.state.ca.us

905 EVALUATION

Evaluation of the CEO's performance should be designed to consider the CEO's effectiveness in carrying out Board policies, meeting the goals for the prior years, solving problems, representing the fair to the community, and having a positive impact on the fair's financial condition. To support the Board's ability to make these judgements, the Board should require the CEO to report at least quarterly the fair's progress in meeting goals and objectives. Performance reviews should meet the following standards:

- **Purpose and process** The Board and CEO agree in advance on both the purpose of the review and the process by which it will be conducted.
- **Goals and objectives** The Board and CEO jointly develop specific annual goals and objectives, including a clear delineation of the board's responsibilities relative to the CEO's.